

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 422

Introduced by Assembly Member Torres

February 23, 2009

An act to add Division 114 (commencing with Section 140000) to the Health and Safety Code, relating to youth and families.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 422, as introduced, Torres. State Youth and Family Master Plan. Existing law creates the California Health and Human Services Agency.

Existing law contains various provisions addressing the needs of California's youth and families.

This bill would require the Secretary of California Health and Human Services to develop the State Youth and Family Master Plan to achieve specified goals that include setting the general guiding principles the state should follow when developing policies affecting the state's youth and families and identifying all state governmental entities responsible for delivering services to youth and families and bridging the communication gaps between those entities. The bill would require the secretary to schedule meetings, as specified, that seek input from certain government, nonprofit, and private sector stakeholders. The bill would require the secretary to annually report on the progress of the development of the plan to the Legislature and the Governor.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) The face of California's youth and families has increasingly
4 become more diverse, and as the population of the state grows, so
5 do the challenges confronting California's youth and families.

6 (b) According to the United States Census Bureau, as of 2006,
7 all of the following are statistical facts about California's youth
8 and families:

9 (1) One out of every five children in California under five years
10 of age lives in poverty.

11 (2) Almost 18 percent of youth in California between 5 to 17
12 years of age, inclusive, live in families living in poverty.

13 (3) Over 18 percent of the state's population under 18 years of
14 age live in poverty, with some individual communities in the state
15 reporting more than a 30-percent poverty rate for that demographic.

16 (4) Over 42 percent of people in California report speaking a
17 language other than English at home.

18 (5) More than seven million children are enrolled in K–12
19 education in California.

20 (c) The State Department of Education reports that 24 percent
21 of California students drop out of school before finishing high
22 school.

23 (d) The 2003–04 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found
24 that at least 188,000 adolescents between 12 to 17 years of age,
25 inclusive, in California have a substance abuse problem requiring
26 treatment, but fewer than 10 percent of those adolescents received
27 substance abuse treatment in 2006. The number of adolescents
28 who have at least tried alcohol or a controlled substance is much
29 higher than those who have a substance abuse problem requiring
30 treatment.

31 (e) California understands that in order to ensure a bright future
32 for all its residents, the state has to ensure that its youth have a
33 safe place to live, learn, and recreate.

34 (f) California has reaffirmed its commitment to its youth and
35 families through the adoption and implementation of multiple laws
36 and initiatives geared toward helping youth and their families
37 succeed in life.

(g) Currently, a number of agencies, departments, boards, and councils have been entrusted with a variety of goals and responsibilities dealing with specific issues impacting California youth and families. However, the state does not have a general state policy on youth and families that could guide future state actions in an integrated manner.

(h) In order to ensure that California makes the most out of its limited resources, the state should bridge the gap of communication between all state entities working to help youth and families by developing a State Youth and Family Master Plan.

SEC. 2. Division 114 (commencing with Section 140000) is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

DIVISION 114. STATE YOUTH AND FAMILY MASTER
PLAN

140000. The Secretary of California Health and Human Services shall develop the State Youth and Family Master Plan.

140001. The State Youth and Family Master Plan shall be designed to achieve goals that include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

(a) Set general guiding principles that California should follow when developing policies affecting the state's youth and families.

(b) Identify all state governmental entities responsible for delivering services to youth and families and ways of bridging the communication gaps between those entities.

(c) Identify opportunities through which cooperation between governmental entities is likely to provide more efficient services to youth and families.

(d) Provide the mechanisms through which state policies affecting the state's youth and families can be assessed to determine which ones are effective and which ones are not.

(e) In light of the shared responsibility that the state and local governments have for providing services to youth and families, identify all of the following:

(1) How the state hinders local governments' efforts to serve youth and families.

(2) Which services for youth and families have been taken over by the state.

(3) Opportunities to eliminate duplicity of efforts to serve youth and families on the part of state and local governments.

140002. (a) In developing the State Youth and Family Master Plan, the secretary shall seek input from all of the following:

(1) Relevant stakeholders within state government whose activities impact youth and families that include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

(A) Arts Council.

(B) Director of Alcohol and Drug Programs.

(C) Director of Community Services and Development.

(D) Director of Developmental Services.

(E) Director of Employment Development.

(F) Director of Fair Employment and Housing.

(G) Director of Health Care Services.

(H) Director of Mental Health.

(I) Director of Rehabilitation.

(J) Director of Social Services.

(K) State Public Defender.

(L) State Public Health Officer.

(M) Student Aid Commission.

(N) Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(2) Relevant stakeholders within the nonprofit and private sector whose activities impact youth and families.

(b) The secretary shall schedule meetings that seek input pursuant to subdivision (a) in a public setting and are scheduled far enough in advance to allow the public to listen and comment.

140003. The secretary shall annually report on the progress of the development of the plan to the Legislature and the Governor.